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SUBJECT: Latvia/Georgia - countering Russia; deploying in EU mission

Ref: A) State 98030 B) Riga 492

1. Latvia has not directly countered Russian claims of genocide in South Ossetia, but senior officials have always rebutted it when asked. According to MFA contacts, Latvia prefers to work through international organizations to counter such claims rather than risk a bilateral spat with Moscow in which Russia inflames the issue of ethnic Russians living in Latvia. PM Godmanis has said that he believes an international investigation should examine these Russian claims.

2. Following the September 15 GAERC decision to deploy an EU mission to Georgia, Latvia decided to send five people, drawn from both the Defense and Interior Ministries, to participate in the mission.

LARSON